

NSC BRIEFING

10 November 1959

POLAND

- I. Present meat shortage, a politically sensitive issue, has in past several weeks forced Gomulka to take hard look at Poland's general situation.
 - A. Although per capita meat consumption compares favorably with that of Western European countries, Poles bitterly resent recently instituted meat rationing and government-decreed price increases.
 - B. Present meat supply picture--which prolonged drought this fall threatens to worsen--is direct result of unwise, unusually heavy slaughter this past spring.
- II. Gomulka obviously not satisfied with situation:
 - A. Much evidence came to light of poor economic planning, lack of coordination, and general inefficiency.
 - 1. Officials had frequently ignored party directives.
 - 2. Large investment drive was causing inflationary spiral.
 - B. Meanwhile, Polish writers and other intellectuals continued refusal to cooperate with regime.
 - C. Gomulka evidently became convinced that trusted friends had let him down deliberately, or because of incompetence.
- III. As result, Gomulka in past couple of weeks has brought new men into high regime positions, some of whom had opposed him in past, and removed men who had supported him. Among changes:
 - A. Two prominent officials of Stalinist Beirut regime were named deputy premiers with important economic responsibilities.

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- B. Edward Ochab, last party first secretary before Gomulka, relieved as Minister of Agriculture to assume more party responsibilities; probably to become Gomulka's first deputy in charge of agricultural, cultural, and agitprop fields.
 - 1. Ochab already knew before his recent US visit--which Polish officials say was "very useful" to him--that he would be leaving Agricultural Ministry.
- IV. Some of Gomulka's new appointees are advocates of tighter controls along Soviet lines; efficient and tough administrators.
 - A. They will probably carry out party orders and try to see that others do the same.
 - 1. Tighter discipline already imposed in some areas of economy.
 - 2. Wages frozen; and in some factories overtime and bonus pay abolished.
 - 3. Excess workers laid off in a number of areas to cut costs of production.
- V. Although return to Stalinism, or reversal of Gomulka's basic policies, is unlikely, present mood of populace is one of uneasy calm.
 - A. Trouble possible if situation worsens, particularly if meat and food shortages become serious during winter.

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ANNEX

I. Per capita meat consumption, 1958:

Poland	124 lbs.
West Germany	110 lbs.
France	165 lbs.
Italy	79 lbs.
Sweden	144 lbs.
United States	152 lbs.

For the first half of 1959, Poland's per capital meat consumption was 12 percent above that for the corresponding period in 1958.

II. Polish harvest mediocre this fall (grain production up, but potato and sugar-beet production down) and winter crops already jeopardized by prolonged drought.

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